UNITED NATIONS

DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

March 1997

Volume XX, Bulletin No. 2

Contents

Page

I. Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addresses Security Council meeting on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory 1

II. General Assembly adopts resolution on Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular occupied East Jerusalem 3

III. Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issues statement on Israeli settlement activity 6

IV. Secretary-General issues statements on Israeli settlement activity and the bombing in Tel Aviv 7

V. Human Rights Commission takes up items relating to the question of Palestine; adopts five resolutions 7

VI. Commission on the Status of Women reviews report; adopts resolution on Palestinian women 18

VII. Committee on the Elimination on Racial Discrimination takes decision on Israel's reporting obligations 20

VIII. Council of the League of Arab States issues statement concerning the expansion of Israeli settlements 20

This bulletin, and back issues,
can be found in the Lotus Notes-based
United Nations Information System
on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) at:
212-963-7197 (server:DPA4) as well as
on the Internet (http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/dpr/).

I. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ADDRESSES SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

On 5 March 1997, with reference to a letter dated 27 February 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February (S/1997/165) and a letter to the United Nations dated 28 February 1997 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (S/1997/172), the Security Council convened a meeting to consider the decision of the Israeli Government to begin construction on new housing in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area south of East Jerusalem. After two days of debate, the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution owing to the negative vote by a permanent member (S/PV.3745 and Resumption 1). The Council met again on 21 March (S/PV.3745 Resumption 2). At that meeting, the Council again failed to adopt a draft resolution owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. In the course of the debate, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), made a statement, which is reproduced below:

(interpretation from French):

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I am sure that under your enlightened guidance the Council's work will be very successful. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Mahugu, Permanent Representative of Kenya, for the exemplary manner in which he presided over the work of the Council in February 1997.

I should like to thank the members of the Council for giving me this opportunity, as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to participate in this important debate on the decision taken by the Israeli authorities to build housing for Jewish settlers in the area of Jabal Abu Ghneim in the southern part of East Jerusalem.

Our Committee vehemently deplores this decision, which is a violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and many relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the situation in occupied Palestine. The decision was particularly untimely in that on 15 January the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization had reached agreement on redeployment in Hebron; that agreement, which was regarded as a major event by the international community, had given new impetus to the peace process.

The decision of the Israeli Government runs counter to the letter and the spirit of the Declaration of Principles on the Interim Self-Government Arrangements, which the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed on 13 September 1993, as well as to agreements reached later, particularly the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in September 1995.

Moreover, this decision, along with the closing of four Palestinian offices in East Jerusalem, has come at a time when the Israeli army continues to seal off Palestinian territories and is delaying its withdrawal from some sectors in the West Bank, thereby jeopardizing the continuation of the peace process. As these measures were taken just before the new stage of negotiations on Jerusalem, they seem to take on the character of *fait accompli*. In short, this decision undermines the credibility of the entire peace process and has created undesirable tensions in the region at this crucial stage of the

status negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories.

This new attempt to Judaize Jerusalem, coming after the attempt in May 1995 and the various confiscations of Palestinian land to establish or expand Israeli settlements, have all provoked the general disapproval of the international community and confounded sensibilities.

The sponsors of the peace process, as well as the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, have all unanimously condemned this policy. The Organization of African Unity, whose Council of Ministers was meeting at the time, also adopted a resolution reflecting the concerns of the international community.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, through me, would like to associate itself with this great movement in order urgently to call upon the Israeli Government to refrain from altering the physical character, the demographic composition and the institutional structure of the city of Jerusalem and the status of the Palestinian territories and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. It calls upon Israel above all to implement quickly and comprehensively the agreements already concluded between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in order to create the necessary conditions for a just and lasting settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 465 (1980) and 478 (1980).

The Committee believes that real political will is essential to relaunching the peace process and to preventing the current situation from deteriorating further, thus damaging the efforts of many persons of good will to establish an era of peace and stability in the Middle East.

As has been forcefully reaffirmed by previous speakers, if we wish to achieve reconciliation, establish a commonality of interests and realize the desire to live shared by the Palestinian and Israeli parties, there is no alternative to the agreements already reached.

History has often shown us over the course of the centuries that attempts to impose demands solely by force can only unleash a bloodbath and are usually doomed to failure. The sooner the Israeli leaders recognize that peace and stability are based on compromise and that mutual interests and the establishment of a partnership cannot be imposed unilaterally, the better it will be for all the peoples of the region. The policies and attitudes of the occupier and the denial of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people are incompatible with efforts to pursue the current peace process.

In convening this meeting, the members of the Security Council have shown that the decision taken by the Israeli Government is a source of major concern for the international community as a whole. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People therefore hopes that, at the end of this debate, the Council will demonstrate to world public opinion its unshakable will to annul the Israeli decision to build housing for Jewish settlers in Jabal Abu Ghneim and to put an end to the policy of the Judaization of the Holy City of Jerusalem, a symbol of peaceful coexistence of peoples and religions.

It is time for all the peoples of the region, who have brought such transcendental messages to the world, to learn to live together, respect one another and create the necessary conditions for peace and trust, the benefits of which will redound to the entire region.

II. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, IN PARTICULAR OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

At the request of the Group of Arab States (A/51/822) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/51/823), urgent meetings of the General Assembly were held on 12 and 13 March 1997 to discuss Israel's decision to initiative new settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem. Resolution 51/223, which was adopted on 13 March, is reproduced below.

Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular in occupied East Jerusalem

The General Assembly,

Having considered the letters dated 21 1/ 25 2/ and 27 3/ February 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States,

Expressing deep concern at the decision of the Government of Israel to initiate new settlement activities in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area in East Jerusalem,

Expressing concern about other recent measures that encourage or facilitate new settlement activities,

Stressing that such settlements are illegal and a major obstacle to peace,

Recalling its resolutions on Jerusalem and other relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions,

Confirming that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel which purport to alter the status of Jerusalem, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, are invalid and cannot change that status,

Reaffirming its support for the Middle East peace process and all its achievements, including the recent agreement on Hebron,

Concerned about the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process, including the impact these have on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, and urging the parties to fulfil their obligations, including under the agreements already reached,

Having discussed the situation at its 91st, 92nd and 93rd plenary meetings on 12 and 13 March 1997,

1. Calls upon the Israeli authorities to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement activities, which alter the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and have negative implications for the Middle East peace process;

2. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in

---

1/ A/51/805-S//1997/149; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1997, document S/1997/149.

2/ A/51/808-S/1997/157; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1997, document S/1997/157.

3/ Official Records of the Security Council Fifty-second Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1997, document S/1997/165.

Time of War of 12 August 1949,4/ which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

3. Calls upon all parties to continue, in the interests of peace and security, their negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis and the timely implementation of the agreements reached;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Government of Israel the provisions of the present resolution.

93rd plenary meeting
13 March 1997
Adopted by a vote of 130 in favour, 2 against, with 2 abstentions.

4/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, Nos. 970 to 973.

During the course of the meetings, the Chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), made a statement, excerpts from which follow (A/51/PV.91):

Mr. Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): It is with real pleasure, Sir, that I see you presiding over this important meeting of the General Assembly, urgently convened at the request of the Group of Arab States for a reason known to us all. It is regrettable that the Security Council did not respond to the decision of the Israeli Government, the occupying Power, to build a new settlement in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area in southern East Jerusalem, even though the members of the Council and all other delegations that participated in the debate on 5 and 6 March 1997 unanimously denounced and rejected that decision. Various other measures Israel has adopted to strengthen its grip on East Jerusalem in advance of the negotiations were also referred to during the Council debate.

On 7 March the Security Council failed to adopt a draft resolution submitted by France, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which would have called upon the Israeli authorities to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement activities, which alter the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and have negative implications for the Middle East peace process.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People regrets that this draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a member of the Security Council. In the view of the Committee, a resolution reaffirming the Security Council's earlier decisions would have been timely and would indeed have helped progress in the peace process. Nonetheless, we note with satisfaction that the other members of the Security Council voted in favour of the draft resolution, thus sending a clear political message to the Israeli authorities: that the whole international community considers their decision to be a serious violation of United Nations resolutions and of international law, and that this Israeli decision could well compromise the Middle East peace process and the integrity of the agreements reached between the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

While it is true that the peace process has moved forward somewhat, as shown in particular by the recent agreement on redeployment of the Israeli

army in Hebron - a redeployment which the international community viewed as a major event that made it possible for the peace process to be resumed - the illegal decision of the Israeli Government is a major source of concern because of the harsh blow it could deal the Middle East peace process. Combined with other measures on East Jerusalem and the obstacles and delays experienced throughout the peace process, this decision casts serious doubt on the commitment and political will of the occupying Power to implement the provisions of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements and on its will to establish just peace with the Palestinians on the basis of the formula established at Madrid and Oslo.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is deeply concerned at this situation, which could have a negative impact on the final status negotiations, which are of deep concern not only to the peoples of the region but to the entire international community.

The status of Jerusalem/Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the future of the occupied Palestinian territories fall within the purview of international law and the will of the international community. The status of that international city has been the subject of numerous statements by the international community and by the Security Council. The annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967 and the Israeli law naming Jerusalem as the State capital were rejected by the Security Council, which declared those measures null and void.

Many United Nations resolutions, notably Security Council resolutions 446 (1979), 452 (1979) and 465 (1980), have condemned Israel's policy of building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. Moreover, that policy of the occupying Power is a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention; all the measures taken by Israel in this sphere are without legal validity and should be rescinded.

Some argue that the United Nations should not address these matters, and that they should be dealt with in the permanent status negotiations; this argument is unacceptable to us. First of all, the fact that the parties decided to negotiate within a given framework in no way negates the respect that must be accorded the principles of international law, and does not end the role of the United Nations and the international community in safeguarding international law.

Furthermore, the Committee considers that the goal of the agreed peace process is to bring about the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which are based on the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. The international community in general and the United Nations in particular must be closely involved in the various stages of the peace process and must continue to help the process along and keep it on track.

We must not forget that the General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed that the United Nations will bear a central ongoing responsibility with regard to the question of Palestine until all aspects of that question are resolved in accordance with international law.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is convinced that the peace process will make progress only if both parties are genuinely prepared to implement all measures and provisions in the agreements they so courageously and painstakingly concluded. At this critical stage, it is essential for the success of the peace process for the parties to spare no effort to do away with such factors as the climate of mistrust and suspicion.

The international community, and the leaders who were bold enough to make a historic breakthrough for peace, must not be disappointed. It is essential that the peace process not be compromised by short-sighted policies. Here, as elsewhere, it is crucial that the parties consider the issue from a political and historical perspective.

The Committee believes that now more than ever, genuine political will is needed to resume the

peace process and prevent the situation from deteriorating once again, which could undermine the efforts made by all those peace-loving peoples throughout the world who have worked so hard for the dawning of an era of peace, understanding and stability in the Middle East.

It is in the interest of all the peoples in the region for the Israeli leaders to recognize, as soon as possible, that this peace can be achieved only if it is a just one. This quest for peace requires compromise and the establishment of a genuine partnership of trust.

In the final analysis, the repeated denial of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people cannot easily be reconciled with the efforts to continue and consolidate the peace process.

The convening of this meeting by the members of the General Assembly sends a clear signal to international public opinion regarding the extent to which the decision taken by the Israeli Government is untimely and fraught with consequences. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People hopes that following this debate, the General Assembly will show overwhelmingly its firm resolve to see to it that Israel rescinds its decision to build housing units for Jewish settlers in the area of Jabal Abu Ghneim and puts an end to its policy of Judaizing the Holy City of Jerusalem, a city that symbolizes the peaceful coexistence of believers from the three monotheistic religions - this city which must remain, as its name indicates, a city of peace.

As I stated in the Security Council, it is high time that all the peoples in the region, who have made irreplaceable contributions to our civilization, learn to live together in mutual respect and forge a peace that would benefit the region as a whole.

In conclusion, like previous speakers, I should like to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency the late Mr. Deng Xiaoping, Paramount Leader of the People's Republic of China, who passed away recently. Possessed of outstanding statesmanlike qualities, foresight and wisdom, he has left, through his efforts to ensure the prosperity of the Chinese people, an indelible mark on history at the end of this century.

Two other great leaders have passed away recently: President Cheddi Jagan of Guyana and the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Mr. Michael Manley, both of whom also were illustrious statesmen. We would like to express our sympathy and to pay a well-deserved tribute to them.

Finally, we would like to convey our condolences to the Government of Pakistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the loss of human life they have suffered in the wake of the natural disasters that struck their countries.

III. BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ISSUES STATEMENT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY

The following statement was issued on 18 March by the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (GA/PAL/742):

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People greatly deplores the beginning of construction of a new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim mountain, despite the overwhelming opposition of the international community as expressed in General

Assembly resolution 51/223 (see p.3 above), which was co-sponsored by 57 countries and received 130 votes in favour and only 2 against. The Bureau wishes to express its most serious concern at the negative implications that this decision may have for the future of the peace process. It calls for an end to the policies of military occupation, land confiscation and settlement, and for the resumption of negotiations based on the agreements already reached, in a spirit of mutuality and goodwill.

IV. SECRETARY-GENERAL ISSUES STATEMENTS ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AND THE BOMBING IN TEL AVIV

The following was issued on 4 March by the spokesman for the Secretary-General (see SG/SM/6174):

The Secretary-General has learned with concern the decision of the Government of Israel to proceed with construction at Har Homa. He considers unhelpful any action which may impede the final status negotiations scheduled to begin next month between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. No objective is more important than for the parties to find mutually agreeable solutions to the sensitive issues involved, including Jerusalem.

The following statement was issued on 21 March by the spokesman for the Secretary-General (see SG/SM/6187):

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the bombing in Tel Aviv today causing death and injury to numerous civilians. He expresses condolences to bereaved families and to the Government and people of Israel.

At the same time, the Secretary-General wishes to reiterate his appeal to the parties not to allow odious acts of this nature to derail the peace process. He sincerely hopes that both parties will intensify their efforts to overcome existing obstacles to a speedy return to the peace process.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TAKES UP ITEMS RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE; ADOPTS FIVE RESOLUTIONS

The Commission on Human Rights began its fifty-third session at Geneva on 10 March 1997. The Commission considered issues relating to the question of Palestine under items 4 and 7 of its agenda entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine" and "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation".

Under item 4, the Commission had before it a note by the Secretary-General listing United Nations reports issued between sessions of the Commission that deal with the living conditions of the population of the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories under the Israeli occupation (E/CN.4/1997/15) and a

report by the Secretary-General on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/CN.4/1997/13) as well as a note from the League of Arab States (E/CN.4/1997/109). The Commission also heard a report by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Hannu Halinen, pursuant to Commission resolution 1993/2 A of 19 February 1993. The Rapporteur submitted the following conclusions and recommendations in his report (E/CN.4/1997/16, paras. 32-50).

32. Despite the grave concerns reported to the Special Rapporteur, satisfaction should be expressed that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are showing concern and making continuous efforts to advance the respect for human rights. An overall deterioration of the human rights situation, therefore, has largely been avoided and determined steps in the right direction have been taken, particularly concerning the release of prisoners and the advancement of the Palestinian economy.

33. The Government of Israel is functioning in an open and democratic environment. It is thus exposed to criticism and pressure, both national and international. The Special Rapporteur is convinced that isolating or singling out the Israeli Government in international forums would not be conducive to improvements in Israel's human rights record. The consistent building up of awareness in the country about international human rights standards and the participation of the society at all levels in implementing those standards are to be further encouraged. The free press and an active non-governmental organization community contribute in a significant manner to the ongoing domestic discussion. What is crucial, however, is the role of the Government in this context. The duty of the international community is to convince the Government, not in a confrontational and accusatory way, but in the spirit of compromise and mutual understanding, that cooperation, be it bilateral, with regional organizations or with the United Nations, is in its best interest. What is at stake is the building of confidence and trust between Israelis and Palestinians. At stake to the same extent is the building of trust and confidence between the Israeli Government and the world community.

34. It should be recalled that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, as contained in paragraph 4 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/2 A, is:

> "(a) To investigate Israel's violations of the principles and bases of international law, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
>
> "(b) To receive communications, to hear witnesses, and to use such modalities of procedure as he may deem necessary for his mandate;
>
> "(c) To report, with his conclusions and recommendations, to the Commission on Human Rights at its future sessions, until the end of the Israeli occupation of those territories."

35. During informal contacts with representatives of the Israeli Government, the Special Rapporteur was informed repeatedly that the Government would cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur as soon as Israel is placed on an equal footing with other countries subjected to the scrutiny of a special rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur has no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Israeli Government in this respect.

36. In his report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session, the Special Rapporteur pointed out that it appeared indispensable that the role of the Special Rapporteur should be reviewed so as to enable him to make a more action-oriented contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights in the area. The report noted further that the Special Rapporteur could not be effective in his work without the full cooperation of the Government of Israel. The

responsibility for improving the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip lies with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which should apply all the principles of human rights and humanitarian law. Israel, as the occupying Power, continues to have special obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. On that basis, the Special Rapporteur invited the Commission on Human Rights to consider amending his mandate.

37. It is clear that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur as adopted some four years ago is in some ways obsolete and exceptional; it does not refer at all to the peace process; it does not authorize the Special Rapporteur to study and recommend constructive human rights and humanitarian programmes to prevent violations or remedy their aftermath; it limits itself to Israel's violations only in the occupied territories; and, unlike all other mandates, its duration is open-ended. However, it is equally clear that the root cause of the violations, the occupation, is an exceptional situation, and can consequently warrant a certain exceptional consideration.

38. The Special Rapporteur notes with satisfaction the recent decision by the Government of Israel to release all Palestinian women prisoners. It is hoped that this would lead to the early release of other prisoners, as already stipulated in the so-called Oslo Agreements. For the Government of Israel, measures taken with respect to the Palestinian prisoners in Israel would undoubtedly be the clearest way to convey its sincerity in building up a relationship of trust with the Palestinian Authority.

39. Reports of practices amounting to torture during interrogation by Israeli security officials continue to give cause for concern. The exercise of physical and psychological pressure allowed recently by the High Court of Israel in conjunction with interrogation procedures is contradictory to the standards enshrined in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and cannot be accepted. All allegations of torture should be investigated by independent judicial bodies. Those found guilty should not enjoy impunity. The recommendation by the United Nations Committee against Torture to put an immediate end to current interrogation practices and grant access to appropriate rehabilitation and compensation measures to the victims of such practices should be implemented without further delay.

40. A large number of persons remain in administrative detention where they have been placed by the Government of Israel. In some cases, detention has been extended for years. All such detainees should be brought to a fair trial or released.

41. The settlements are in contradiction to the Geneva Conventions as well as the human rights of the Palestinian people. The Government of Israel should not wait for the outcome of the negotiations regarding the peace process but should rather deal with this highly sensitive issue as early as possible. No new settlements should be built, no existing ones expanded and no bypass roads or security areas should be established without consulting the indigenous population.

42. Measures taken by the Israeli Government to increase the freedom of movement are to be welcomed. Steps such as increasing the number of work permits issued to Palestinians, which will help to enhance the Palestinian economy, are clearly conducive to the alleviation of many human rights problems. The closure and other indiscriminate measures amounting to collective punishment imposed on the inhabitants of the occupied territories should be discontinued.

43. It should be noted that as long as the occupation continues, the Palestinian Authority has no responsibility based on international law to respect obligations of human rights and humanitarian law, since formally it cannot be a party to any relevant agreements or conventions. Therefore, it is all the more noteworthy that the Palestinian Authority is making consistent efforts to

act already at this stage in accordance with those agreements and conventions.

44. The Palestinian Authority is facing a comprehensive nation-building programme. The Palestinian society has decided to embark on a path leading to democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. International support is not only badly needed but can be an effective and even instrumental contribution to nation-building, thereby helping to prevent conflicts in the future. The international response, notably from the donor community, has been commendable. The Special Rapporteur is looking forward to the same excellent cooperation with Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan, the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories appointed recently by the Secretary-General, as he enjoyed with his predecessor, Mr. Terje Roed Larsen. The recent opening of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights in Gaza is a significant step towards the promotion of human rights in the area.

45. The Special Rapporteur had the opportunity to visit the office of the United Nations High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights in Gaza established on the basis of an agreement with the Palestinian Authority for the implementation of a technical cooperation programme. The office is responsible for implementing a multi-component programme focusing on institution- building in the area of the rule of law, including support to law reform efforts, strengthening the system for the administration of justice, cooperation with national human rights institutions, support to non-governmental organizations and formulation of a national plan of action for human rights. Implementation of the programme has commenced in cooperation with key government ministries, law enforcement agencies, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights and Palestinian non-governmental organizations. The Special Rapporteur is pleased to report that full cooperation has been extended to the United Nations High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights by the Palestinian authorities in this regard. The Special Rapporteur considers continued cooperation as an essential aspect of the development efforts currently under way in Palestinian areas under self-rule, and as an important means of improving human rights protection in those areas. He welcomes the commitment of the Palestinian authorities to make it a success.

46. The Palestinian Authority cooperates fully with the international community. This cooperation is the best guarantee that those few human rights concerns attributed to the Palestinian Authority - cases of torture, administrative detention and restrictions on the freedom of the press and opinion - can be duly solved.

47. One of the key elements of the post-Hebron agenda has to be the prevention of violent conflicts. The cause of conflicts often lies in the violation of human rights which, in turn, generates tension that can lead to outbursts of violence. Crucial in preventing crises is the increased accountability of Governments and administrative structures as well as respect for human rights and the rule of law.

48. Violations of human rights touch the very heart of the people affected. Building up the trust and confidence necessary for sustainable peace in the area is difficult, if not impossible, without determined efforts to suppress those violations. The peace process, while addressing itself to the root cause of violations, the foreign occupation, provides the best framework and guarantee for eradicating human rights problems in the area. Therefore, the Special Rapporteur calls for the full implementation of the Interim Agreement of 1995.

49. Since human rights concerns go beyond the scope of the peace process as such, they need to be considered on their own merits, and in a comprehensive manner. Globally, the key forum for this discussion is the Commission on Human Rights. The Commission, instead of repeating old accusations, should engage in a profound discussion about the ways and means of addressing the human rights situation in a constructive and forward-looking manner. The Special Rapporteur is

confident that the Commission, while considering further improvements in its working methods, will find a more forward-looking and businesslike approach for the discussion of the human rights situation in the Middle East. This is all the more important because ignoring relevant developments or setting conditions for their consideration would not be conducive to the ultimate aim, the improvement of the human rights situation.

50. The understanding of the fact that Israelis and Palestinians are going to have to live together is gradually gaining ground. The understanding of the human rights issues in that context and what to do to deal with them still need to be worked out. This entails more contacts and discussions, more transparency, more participation at all levels, more publicity, but also more confidential approaches, meetings and seminars. The Special Rapporteur, while noting with satisfaction an increasing number of bilateral, regional and international efforts in this regard, would encourage more concerted action by relevant parties to focus on human rights in the context of the peace process.

Under item 7, the Commission on Human Rights also had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories prepared pursuant to a request of the Commission which stated that Israel had not submitted information in connection with the preparation of the report (E/CN.4/1997/23).

On 26 March, the Commission adopted five resolutions. The full texts of the resolutions are given below:

1997/1. Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

The Commission on Human Rights,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as by the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Guided also by the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Taking into consideration the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of Additional Protocol I thereto, and the Hague Convention IV of 1907,

Recalling the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights related to the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories,

Recalling also the General Assembly resolutions on Israeli violations of human rights in the Palestinian occupied territories, since 1967 and until now,

Recalling further the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23),

Taking note of the report (E/CN.4/1997/16) of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Hannu Halinen, regarding his mission undertaken in accordance with Commission resolution 1993/2 A of 19 February 1993,

Taking note also of the reports of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories submitted to the General Assembly since 1968, including the latest (A/51/99/Add.2),

Noting with great concern the continued Israeli refusal to abide by the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights calling upon Israel to put an end to the violations of human rights and affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the Palestinian and other Arab Territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem,

Welcoming anew the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 and of the following agreements, whereby violations of human rights will end through the implementation of these agreements and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on the subject, including the latest, resolution 1996/3 of 11 April 1996,

1. Condemns the continued violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories since the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993, in particular the continuation of acts of killing, the detention of thousands of Palestinians without trial, the continuation of the confiscation of lands, the extension and the establishment of Israeli settlements, the confiscation of property of Palestinians and expropriation of their land, and calls upon Israel to cease these acts immediately;

2. Also condemns the opening of a tunnel under the Al Aqsa mosque, the establishment of an Israeli settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in occupied Arab Jerusalem, the revocation of identity cards of the citizens of the Palestinian city of Jerusalem and forcing them to live outside their home with the aim of the Judaization of Jerusalem, and calls upon the Government of Israel to close the tunnel and to put an end immediately to these practices;

3. Further condemns the use of torture against Palestinians during interrogation, which the Israeli High Court of Justice has legitimized, and calls upon the Government of Israel to refrain immediately from the current interrogation practices and to work on abolishing the above-mentioned legitimization;

4. Reaffirms that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and considers any change in the geographic and demographic status of the city of Jerusalem from its situation prior to the June 1967 war to be illegal and void;

5. Calls upon Israel to cease immediately its policy of enforcing collective punishments, such as demolition of houses and closure of the Palestinian territory, a measure which threatens thousands of Palestinians with hunger and endangers their lives;

6. Calls once more upon Israel, the occupying Power, to desist from all forms of violation of human rights in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories and to respect the bases of international law, the principles of international humanitarian law and its commitments to the provisions of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations;

7. Also calls upon Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Commission on Human Rights;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of the Government of Israel and all other Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it on the widest possible scale, and to report on its implementation by the Government of Israel to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session;

9. Also requests the Secretary-General to provide the Commission on Human Rights with all United Nations reports issued between sessions of the Commission that deal with the conditions in which the citizens of the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories are living under the Israeli occupation;

10. Decides to consider the question at its fifty-fourth session, as a matter of high priority.

Adopted by a vote of 25 in favour, 1 against, with 23 abstentions.

1997/2. Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

The Commission on Human Rights,

Deeply concerned at the suffering of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan due to the violation of their fundamental and human rights since the Israeli military occupation of 1967,

Recalling Security Council resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981,

Recalling also all relevant General Assembly resolutions, including the latest, resolution 51/135 of 13 December 1996, in which the Assembly, inter alia, called upon Israel to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981), to put an end to its practices violating the rights of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and to put an end to its occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan,

Reaffirming once more the illegality of Israel's decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, which has resulted in the effective annexation of that territory,

Reaffirming the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law,

Taking note with deep concern of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/51/99/Add.2) and, in this connection, deploring the Israeli settlement in the occupied Arab territories and regretting Israeli's constant refusal to cooperate with and to receive the Special Committee,

Guided by the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the relevant provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 to the occupied Syrian Golan,

Reaffirming the importance of the peace process which started in Madrid on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 and the principle of land for peace, which aims at the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Expressing concern that the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks has stumbled, and hoping that commitments and guarantees reached during the previous talks will be respected in order that the talks may resume as soon as possible,

Reaffirming its previous relevant resolutions, the most recent being resolution 1996/2 of 11 April 1996,

1. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, particularly resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council, inter alia, decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision;

2. Also calls upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and emphasizes that the displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and to recover their properties;

3. Further calls upon Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and to desist from its repressive measures against them, and from all other practices mentioned in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories;

4. Determines that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and have no legal effect;

5. Calls once again upon Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to in the present resolution;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations and to give it the widest possible publicity, and to report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session, as a matter of high priority, the item entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab Territories, including Palestine".

Adopted by a vote of 26 in favour, 1 against, with 23 abstentions.

1997/3. Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories

The Commission on Human Rights,

Reaffirming that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations and as elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable instruments,

Mindful that Israel is a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to Palestinian and all Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling previous resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, most recently resolution 1996/4 of 11 April 1996 in which, inter alia, it reaffirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories,

1. Welcomes

(a) The positive developments that originated with the International Peace Conference on the Middle East convened in Madrid on 30 October 1991, including in particular the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed in Washington by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 as well as the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington by the same parties on 28 September 1995;

(b) The recent step towards the further implementation of the relevant agreements, through the signing of the Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron;

(c) The report (E/CN.4/1997/16) submitted by the Special Rapporteur pursuant to resolution 1993/2 A of 19 February 1993;

2. Expresses its deep concern

(a) At the Israeli settlement activities, including the expansion of settlements, the installation of settlers in the occupied territories, the expropriation of land, the demolition of houses, the confiscation of property, the expulsion of local residents and the construction of bypass roads, which change the physical character and demographic composition of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, since they are illegal, constitute a violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and are a major obstacle to peace;

(b) At and strongly condemns all acts of terrorism, whilst calling upon all parties not to allow any acts of terrorism to affect the ongoing peace process negatively;

3. Calls upon the Government of Israel

(a) To comply fully with the provisions of previous Commission resolutions on the subject, most recently resolution 1996/4 of 11 April 1996;

(b) To cease completely its policy of expanding the settlements and related activities in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem;

(c) To forego and prevent any new installation of settlers in the occupied territories;

(d) To address the question of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories during the negotiations on the final status of the territories, which are due to resume within two months after implementation of the Protocol concerning Redeployment in Hebron.

Adopted by a vote of 47 in favour, 1 against, with 2 abstentions.

1997/4. Situation in occupied Palestine

The Commission on Human Rights,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the provisions of Articles 1 and 55 thereof, which affirm the right of peoples to self-determination, and scrupulous respect of the principle of refraining in international relations from the threat or use of force, as specified in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Guided also by the provisions of article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which affirm that all peoples have the right to self-determination,

Taking into consideration the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960,

Guided by the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23), and in particular Part I, paragraphs 2 and 3, relating to the right to self-determination of all peoples and especially those subject to foreign occupation,

Recalling Security Council resolutions 183 (1963) of 11 December 1963 and 218 (1965) of 23 November 1965, which affirmed the interpretation of the principle of self-determination as laid down in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV),

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 181 A and B (II) of 29 November 1947 and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as all other resolutions which confirm and define the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to self-determination without external interference and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil, especially Assembly resolutions ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980 and 37/86 E of 20 December 1982,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions in this regard, including the latest, resolution 1996/5 of 11 April 1996,

Bearing in mind the reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly,

Reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and declarations, and the provisions of international covenants and instruments relating to the right to self-determination as an international principle and as a right of all peoples in the world, as it is a jus cogens in international law,

Recalling that the foreign occupation by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State constitutes an obstacle to and a grave violation of human rights according to Part I, paragraph 30, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and an act of aggression and a crime against the peace and security of mankind according to General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974,

Welcoming the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington on 13 September 1993, and the following agreements aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to achieve their national rights, and, principally, their right to self-determination free of external intervention,

1. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference;

2. Calls upon Israel to comply with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and to withdraw from the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the other Arab territories which it has occupied since 1967 by military force, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, so as to enable the Palestinian people

to exercise their universally recognized right to self-determination;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution to the Government of Israel and all other Governments, to distribute it on the widest possible scale and to make available to the Commission on Human Rights, prior to the convening of its fifty-fourth session, all information pertaining to the implementation of the present resolution by the Government of Israel;

4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation" and to consider the situation in occupied Palestine under that item, as a matter of high priority.

Adopted by a vote of 28 in favour, 1 against, with 21 abstentions.

1997/6. Middle East peace process

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling its resolution 1996/7 of 11 April 1996,

Recalling also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23),

Recalling further the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid on 30 October 1991, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, and the subsequent bilateral negotiations, as well as the meetings of the multilateral working groups, and noting with satisfaction the broad international support for the peace process,

Noting the continuing positive participation of the United Nations as an extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups,

Recalling the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism annexed to General Assembly resolution 49/60 of 9 December 1994, in which the Assembly declared that acts, methods and practices of terrorism constituted a grave violation of the purpose and principles of the United Nations, and might pose a threat to international peace and security, jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder international cooperation and aim at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic bodies of society,

1. Stresses the importance of, and the need for, achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

2. Emphasizes that the achievement of such a peace is vital to the full implementation of human rights in all areas;

3. Welcomes the peace process started in Madrid and supports the subsequent bilateral negotiations;

4. Also welcomes the Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron of 17 January 1997 signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the subsequent redeployment of Israeli troops from parts of Hebron;

5. Further welcomes the release of female Palestinian prisoners from Israeli detention as a confidence-building measure;

6. Calls upon all parties to protect the human rights and well-being of all detained persons under their control;

7. Supports the declaration adopted at the Summit of Peacemakers held at Sharm El Sheik,

Egypt, on 13 March 1996, which had as its objectives enhancing the peace process, promoting security and combating terrorism, and condemns terrorist attacks in the Middle East which seek to undermine the peace process and which have caused loss of life and injuries;

8. Calls upon all parties to work to advance a free civil society, under the rule of law;

9. Calls upon the Centre for Human Rights to continue to make available, on request, its programme of advisory services and technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and invites Governments to continue to contribute to the programme;

10. Expresses its full support for the achievements of the peace process thus far, in particular the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed on 13 September 1993 by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, the subsequent Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed on 4 May 1994 by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, their 29 August 1994 Agreement on the Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of 28 September 1995, the Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron signed on 17 January 1997, the Agreement between Israel and Jordan on the Common Agenda, of 14 September 1993, the Washington Declaration signed by Jordan and Israel on 25 July 1994, and the Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace of 26 October 1994, which constitute important steps in achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and urges all parties to implement the agreements reached;

11. Encourages the continuation of negotiations on the implementation of the next stage of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements.

Adopted without a vote.

VI. COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN REVIEWS REPORT; ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON PALESTINIAN WOMEN

At its forty-first session, held in New York from 10 to 21 March 1997, the Commission on the Status of Women considered the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/1997/2) on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women submitted, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/2.

On 24 March, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted, by 38 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions, a draft resolution entitled "Palestinian women", which it recommended to the Economic and Social Council for adoption, and which reads:

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,1/

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children,2/ and the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,3/

Recalling also its resolution 1996/5 and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Recalling the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 4/ as it concerns the protection of civilian populations,

Aware of the signing by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993 5/ and of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 28 September 1995, both in Washington, D.C., within the framework of the Middle East peace process,

Concerned about the continuing difficult situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and about the severe consequences of continuous Israeli illegal settlements activities as well as the harsh economic conditions and other consequences for the situation of Palestine women and their families, resulting from the frequent closure and isolation of the occupied territory,

1. Stresses its support for the Middle East peace process and the need for full implementation of the agreements already reached between the parties;

2. Reaffirms that the Israeli occupation remains a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development planning of their society;

3. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,6/ the Regulations annexed to The Hague Convention IV of 18 October 1907 7/ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949,8/ in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families;

4. Calls upon Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties in the occupied Palestinian territory, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

1/ E/CN.6/1997/2, sect. II.A.

2/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

3/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20 and Add.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

4/ Assembly resolution 48/104.

5/ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

6/ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

7/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

8/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

5. Urges Member States, international financial organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions to intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women for the creation of projects responding to their needs, especially during the transitional period;

6. Requests the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women by all available means, and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

VII. COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION TAKES DECISION ON ISRAEL'S REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

At its fiftieth session, concluded on 21 March 1997, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination decided to schedule Israel for consideration under the Committees's early warning and urgent procedures mechanism, inter alia, in connection with the situation in East Jerusalem and various outstanding reports, during the 1997 summer session, to be held from 4 to 22 August (HR/CERD/97/30).

VIII. COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ISSUES STATEMENT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

The Council of the League of Arab States, issued the following statement at its resumed extraordinary meeting on 1 March (A/51/816-S/1997/175, annex):

The Council of the League of Arab States, at its meeting on Saturday, 1 March 1997 of the resumed extraordinary session convened on 1 December 1996 to study the expansion of Israeli settlements on occupied Arab land,

Having heard the important statements made on the issue by His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and the President of the session (the Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria),

Having considered the decision taken by the Israeli Government on 26 February 1997 to build a Jewish residential neighbourhood on Jabal Abu Ghneim, south of Arab Jerusalem, a step which is considered a blatant violation of the principles on which the peace process was based and of all international laws and resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 252 (1968) and 338 (1973) which emphasized the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and considered that all measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and

properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change that status,

The Council strongly condemns these Israeli measures, which it considers to be inconsistent with the principles on which the peace process was based, the spirit and the letter of the peace accords signed with the Palestinian side, and the United States letters of guarantee given to the Arab parties at the Madrid Peace Conference;

The Council regards this and other Israeli decisions as a violation of international laws and resolutions and a threat to the peace process that could plunge the region once again into struggle, tension and instability;

The Council recalls the resolutions adopted by Arab Summit Conferences, particularly the most recent Conference held in Cairo, which reaffirmed the commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, based on legitimate international resolutions and the principle of land for peace, in view of the fact that peace is a strategic choice for the Arab community of nations. The Israeli Government's decision to build on Jabal Abu Ghneim, or on any occupied Arab land, will put dangerous obstacles in the path of the peace process. The Israeli Government should revoke this decision, thereby helping to build confidence between the parties to the peace process. In this context, the Council calls upon the United Nations and all its relevant organs, particularly the Security Council, to take decisive action and urge Israel to revoke its decision and halt all settlement activity;

The Council commends the international community, which has widely criticized this oppressive Israeli decision, and expresses its great appreciation to all the States which have affirmed their respect for legitimate international resolutions and criticized and condemned the Israeli decision. Foremost among these are the European Union and the sponsors of the peace process, China, Japan, the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Council urgently requests all States of the world to move quickly and effectively to halt the expansion of Israeli settlements on and fragmentation of occupied Arab land and to put pressure on Israel not to alter the demographic and geographical character of the city of Jerusalem. The Council expects the United States of America to play an effective role in order to save all aspects of the peace process and halt Israeli settlement on occupied Arab land;

The Council urges countries which provide Israel with financial or economic assistance to halt such assistance, since Israel uses it to implement its plans for settlements on occupied Arab land;

The Council affirms its complete solidarity with the Palestinian people and calls for its resistance to be strengthened and supported by every means, particularly through Arab funds, in order to enable it to withstand expropriation and settlement;

The Council commends the Islamic-Christian position, which is working hard to preserve the spiritual and cultural character of the city of Jerusalem and to halt Israeli violations of international resolutions and agreements and Israeli practices that threaten peace and security not only in the Middle East region, but throughout the world;

The Council decides to remain seized of the matter and to request the Secretary-General to follow developments in this field.